

“independent and distinct,” but does not offer any explanation or evidence to support the same.

Such practice is contrary to the requirements to support restriction (see *In re Kase*, 71 USPQ2d 1063, 1064 (Dir. USPTO, 4/21/04) and, therefore, the present Restriction Requirement should be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully traverse on the additional grounds that the Office has not shown that a burden exists in searching the entire application.

Further, MPEP §803 states as follows:

If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the Examiner must examine it on its merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions.

Applicants submit that a search of all claims would not constitute a serious burden on the Office, particularly in view of the fact that Groups I and II are classified in the same subclasses (class 514, subclasses 23, 171, and 266.310).

Additionally, MPEP §821.04 states:

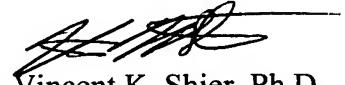
...if applicant elects claims directed to the product, and a product claim is subsequently found allowable, withdrawn process claims which depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the allowable product claim will be rejoined.

Applicants note that should the elected group be found allowable, non-elected process claims should be rejoined.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-identified application is now in condition for examination on the merits, and early notice of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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